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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001378

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CAUCASUS WORKING GROUP HONES IN ON TU-US
COOPERATION

(U) Classified by Pol-Mil Counselor Tim Betts, reasons 1.4,
b/d.

1. (U) The Turkish General Staff (TGS) hosted a working level meeting of the Caucasus Working Group (CWG) February 16-17 in Ankara. The US side was led by ECJ5-E (RUE) Caucasus AO, LTC Albert Zaccor, who was accompanied by ECJ5-E Turkey AO, Lt Col Rob Hopkins. Representatives of the Embassy's Pol-Mil section, DAO and ODC also attended. The Turkish side was led by CPT (N) Ogurlu of TGS/J-5, with COL Ziya Dogan, COL Ozoglu, CPT (N) Kiratli also in attendance. In addition the Turkish DATTs from Georgia and Azerbaijan attended and actively participated in the CWG, providing on-the-ground guidance on many technical issues.

2. (U) The participants sought to identify specific areas of cooperation in Georgia and Azerbaijan to ensure complementarity of US and Turkish security assistance to the region. TGS was forthcoming, cordial and willing to develop recommendations with the US delegation to coordinate theater security cooperation strategies in the region. TGS Deputy J-5, Maj Gen Arslan met with the US delegation to emphasize his continued commitment to CWG.

3. (U) The CWG sessions consisted of Turkish and US briefings on major programs/processes and each side made requests for assistance. Discussions achieved consensus on broad areas for cooperation and the development of a process to systematically cooperate at the TGS-EUCOM and country team levels. In addition, Caspian Guard, Caucasus Clearinghouse and the CWG process schedule were discussed at length and recommendations were developed.

4. (C) The CWG Working group reached the following conclusions:

Georgia:

- US welcomed Turkish training of SF Bde;
- US recognized Turkish lead in Gendarmerie training-development;
- US will explore providing language training materials to the Georgian Joint Military Academy;
- US-Turkey will coordinate Border Guard training;
- US & Turkey will jointly explore plan for Centralized Training Center;
- Turkey and US will approach the new Georgian defense leadership on force structure plans;
- Turkey will reexamine plans for training a tank battalion.

Azerbaijan:

- US recognized Turkish lead in Gendarmerie training-development;
- US will focus on English Language Training;
- US & Turkey agreed to focus any future airbase modernization on Nasosnaya Airbase;
- US welcomed Turkish training of Azeri Army SOF.

CWG Process:

- Reinvigorate Joint Security Cooperation Group (JSCG) Process;
- US agreed to identify members of Tbilisi and Baku US DAOs to participate in future CWG meetings;
- US and TU agreed to include non-MOD/DOD officials in discussions.

Framework for Future CWG Trips and Meetings:

- March 29 joint J5 meeting in Turkey;
- April 12-16 in Azerbaijan (US/TU/AZ);
- April 19-23 in Georgia (US/TU/GA);
- Next full CWG: October 04 in Turkey.

Caucasus Clearing House:

- Turkey agreed to participate in next Caucasus Clearing House meeting at the Marshall Center, April or May and were

willing to explore hosting meeting in Fall 04;
--Turkey will lead coordination in Georgia;
--US will lead coordination in Azerbaijan.

Caspian Guard:

--Turkey agreed to participate in maritime talks with US & Azerbaijan (and potentially Kazakhstan);
--US and Turkey will consult on C2 projects and explore adaptation of Turkish AF C2 concept for Azerbaijan;
--US and Turkey will plan joint maritime SOF training and exercises.

15. (C) Comment: The CWG working group continued the momentum established by the CWG meeting held in November 03 at Williamsburg, VA. The working group provided an opportunity to achieve consensus on priority areas and develop solid recommendations for senior CWG members. After senior-level approval of the above conclusions is obtained and guidance is provided, delegations from TU and US will travel to Georgia and Azerbaijan to develop more concrete solutions for security cooperation.

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